

Poetry.

THE SWEET OLD STORY.

Tell me about the Master!

I am weary and worn to-night,
The day lies behind me in shadow,
And only the evening is light!
Light with a radiant glory
That lingers about the west,
My poor heart is weary, weary,
And longs, like a child, for rest.

Tell me about the Master,

Of the hills He in loneliness trod,
When the tears and blood of His anguish
Dropped down on Judea's sod,
For to me life's seventy mile-stones
But a sorrowful journey mark;
Rough lies the hill country before me,
The mountains behind me are dark.

Tell me about the Master!

Of the wrongs He freely forgave;
Of His love and tender compassion,
Of His love that was mighty to save;
For my heart is weary, weary,
Of the woes and temptations of life,
Of the error that stalks in the noonday
Of falsehood and malice and strife.

Yet I know that whatever of sorrow

Or pain or temptation befall,
The infinite Master has suffered,
And knoweth and pitieth all.

So tell me the sweet old story,

That falls on each wound like a balm,
And my heart that was bruised and broken
Shall grow patient and strong and calm.

—Exchange.

Contributions.

"THE TRAGEDY OF JONAH."

Epitome of a Sermon Delivered at "Old Bethany,"
Near Hollins, on Sunday, the 8th In-
stant by D. O. Moomaw.

The history and biography of the Bible, the repository of the richest of life's lessons. Every vice and virtue illustrated. "Examples unto us on whom the end of the world are come." The heroes and heroines of the Bible were moved by the self-same impulses and emotions that move men and women to-day. The God with whom they dealt is the same to us to-day.

Human nature has not evolved a patentable improvement since Jonah's day. The "Word of the Lord came to Jonah." The "Word that was made flesh" (John 1:14) is to us to-day what the "Word" was to Jonah. The "Word" to Jonah was specific. All of God's commands are specific and comprehensible. John's message to Herod was specific; so was St. Paul's message to Felix; so was Nathan's to David, the adulterer.

God's ways are mysterious and because of that many people refuse salvation.

Instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah embarked for Tarshish. He did exactly the

opposite to what he was commanded, so do we, by inspiration of the carnal mind. Our Lord commands to seek first the kingdom of heaven. By nature we are prone to seek it last. "Come, now," saith the word. "To-morrow" saith the flesh.

Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord, but the eye of the Lord was upon him. We cannot fly from God's presence. The strongest of arch-angel's wings, carrying us upward and onward beyond the orbits of the remotest of the fixed stars, into vast, eternal realms, unexplored by the mightiest of human agencies, could not take us beyond the reach of the Divine eye. "If we take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, behold God is there."

The Lord saw Jonah when he bought his ticket, when he ascended the gang plank, when he, wearied with his tramp, went down into the hold of the ship to sleep. Jonah did not sleep the sweet, sound sleep of innocence, because the sleepless eye was looking at him. The open eye of the death-watch is the terror of convicted criminals.

Jonah never reached Tarshish. So we never realize our most sanguine hopes, our most cherished plans. God's heaviest chastisements will prove his richest blessings when we know more of them than we do to-day.

God sent a storm to stop Jonah's faithless journey. So he sends storms of affliction to turn our hearts from a godless world to himself. If the gentle zephyrs of mercy and prosperity fail to win us to a higher life, a heavenward journey, the storm will come to stop life's ship in mid ocean, and down into the "belly of hell" we must go, if nothing else will suffice.

The sailors asked Jonah what should be done to still the tempest. "Cast me into the sea," was the reply. The sailors tried hard to get Jonah to the shore but failed. So we often try to strive against God's degrees, and try to avoid the penalty for sin. We should not try to resist God, but say, "Thy will be done."

The fish that God prepared swallowed Jonah. "Good-bye, Jonah," cries unbelief. "Don't deliver the verdict before the testimony is all in," replies faith. "Contrary to natural laws," chatters infidelity. "The maker of nature's laws can suspend them," replies fidelity. Fire burns, but the three faithful Hebrews did not feel it; lions eat flesh, but Daniel and the angel passed a pleasant evening in the historic den.

Jonah's submarine voyage had the happy effect to turn his heart to God. He prayed out of the "belly of hell." He ought to have prayed before he started to

Tarshish. We should pray before we embark in any enterprise. Don't undertake anything until God's blessing is asked. Let us have plenty of prayers laid up for the time of storm. Prayers before the storm are better than those during or after it.

God heard Jonah's prayers away down in the deepest of ocean's caverns, down "to the bottom of the mountains." So he hears our prayers. So his judgments are withheld in answer to prayer.

The death angel whispered in the ear of sick Hezekiah the awful summons: "Set thy house in order for thou shalt die." Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed as he had never prayed before. "Fifteen years more of life" came from the sweet lips of the angel of mercy.

God spake to the fish, and up from its slimy bed, over the submerged hills, through the gorges and canyons of the submarine mountains, to the shore next to Nineveh he sped with his restless, lone passenger, and, sick of the indigestible human ration, he cast it out on dry land and Jonah was himself again.

"Go to Nineveh," was the first sound that touched his resurrected ear, and, without stopping to get the wet weeds out of his hair, or to wipe the fishy slime off his clothes, he sped straight to Nineveh, the most thoroughly converted man of whom history records.

All the devils of hell, all the armies of all the kingdoms of the world could not have changed his course. He had lost all desire to go to Tarshish. When he prayed in hell's maw he said, "Lord, if you will get me out of this fix, I will go to Nineveh sure." And he went without standing on the order of his going.

So when we are thoroughly converted we do not hesitate to do what God bids us. No conversion which is not thorough will avail us at the last day. The Lord says, "My son, my daughter, give me thy whole heart." "All, or none," says the Word.

Jonah reached Nineveh and delivered the awful message. No sociology, political economy, evolution, higher criticism, "the coming woman," nor any platform rubbish in that sermon. "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed," rang out in the ominous silence of the calm Eastern gloaming, through palace halls and cottage cuddies, through streets and lanes; and kings and beggars, proud dames and knightly warriors, radiant maidens and chivalrous lads; the carpenter at his bench, the smith at his anvil, the scullion at the ash heap, great and small, rich and poor, slave and freeman, ox, ass, horse, donkey all in which was the breath of life, felt the